



# Newsletter

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

### JULIE'S KEY MESSAGES



## ABOUT US

**GNAO is proud to be RNAO's Interest Group of the Year in 2015!**

**Our Mission:** *To make a positive difference in the lives of older people and the nurses who care for them.*

**Our Vision:** *All older people in the province of Ontario are cared for by nurses whose practice is evidence-informed, relationship-centered and meets gerontological nursing standards.*

**Website:** <http://gnaontario.org/>

**Social Media:** Facebook & Twitter



Hello Colleagues!

I hope your summer is off to a great start. We at GNAO continue to feel the energy from our April AGM, allowing us to begin our new year exploring new avenues and building on recent successes. It's my pleasure to bring you a 'behind the scenes' look at our works in progress and to share ways in which you can become involved in our next steps.

Before I begin, I wanted to clarify why I am referring to our new year when we are already halfway through 2016. Last year GNAO made a decision to separate our Annual General Meeting from our fall Provincial Conference to align with the Not For Profit Act. Our membership year and fiscal year remain unchanged (ending October 31st) but our AGM has moved to April to ensure an Auditors report is available for members to review. As well, Provincial Board members will now be elected for terms beginning in April (change from our previous practice of elections during our fall conference). If this seems confusing, my apologies, most importantly, this change allows GNAO to fulfill its Not For Profit requirements and creates a second opportunity to join together as a provincial group to learn from and network with our colleagues.

As promised, here are three projects currently in the works at GNAO. I hope many of you can identify with these ventures and you feel inspired to share your voice.

### **Highlight #1- Conference Planning**

We are actively involved in planning two conferences in the next year. The first is our GNAO Provincial Conference to be held November 4, 2016 in Kingston. This year's theme is "Gerontological Nursing is More Than You Think: Nursing Across the Continuum". Program and venue information will be available very soon.

**How Can I Help:** If you are a member of the South East Chapter and would like to support the planning committee in creating a stellar learning experience, please contact Denise Owsianicki Conference Chair at [owsianid@providencecare.ca](mailto:owsianid@providencecare.ca).

The second conference is CGNA's Biennial Conference which GNAO will be co-hosting in Ottawa May 4-6, 2017. The conference website is available (<http://cgna2017.ca>) with links to venue and program information as well as the Call for Abstracts (closing September 16, 2016). This event provides a chance for gerontological nurses from across Canada to join together and share best practices and innovations in care.

**How Can I Help:** There are a few ways to support this work; submit an abstract to share with others the exciting work you are involved in, share the event with colleagues and via social media (#CGNA2017), and consider offering to volunteer during the event.

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# JULIE'S KEY MESSAGES (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

## **Highlight #2- Highlighting Gerontological Nursing**

We have been absolutely delighted by the response to our new website feature "Geriatric Nursing Never Gets Old...Highlighting Nurses in Gerontology". If you have not seen this feature, I encourage you to check out our website (<http://gnaontario.org/gnao2013/events/>). Our goal is to highlight the work being done by gerontological nurses across Ontario and to share their passion for care of older adults. In the future, we hope to engage members in conversations using our student discussion forum and social media creating an opportunity to further explore the successes of our colleagues and allow for broader spread of promising practices.

**How Can I Help:** Our Student and New Graduate Liaisons (SNGL) would love to hear from members who want to share their experience. We encourage members in any position from point-of-care to academia, with varying levels of experience to share their stories. Interested members are asked to contact SNGL Annie Lam at [a-nniie@hotmail.com](mailto:a-nniie@hotmail.com).

## **Highlight #3- Recruitment**

GNAO is proud to represent more than 2000 nurses and nursing students from across the province. We have eleven chapters which are committed to enhancing the knowledge and skills of our members through education events and workshops. During these events, members can take advantage of networking opportunities and hopefully, have some fun! To continue to offer these opportunities to members across Ontario, our association must continue to embrace and mentor local leaders. Last year, we successfully recruited nine members to become involved in their local chapter executive through our recruitment package emails, please watch your inboxes for a similar mailing this fall.

**How Can I Help:** Again there are a few ways to support your local chapter and GNAO;

- 1) Consider attending your next local chapter event and commit to connecting with a chapter executive member to see what an executive position entails. Not sure when your next local event is happening, check out our website (<http://gnaontario.org/gnao2013/chapters/>) for local contact information and event listings.
- 2) Engage a student in conversation and share what you most enjoy about a career in gerontological nursing, maybe even invite them to attend an event with you. We all remember what it was like to be a student attending our first networking event, having a friendly face to make initial introductions can make all the difference.
- 3) Lastly, if you would like to share your passion for gerontological nursing on a larger scale and embrace a provincial leadership opportunity, I encourage you to consider putting yourself forward as a candidate for Provincial President Elect. Our Board is committed to providing mentorship to ensure a successful transition into Board activities and takes pride in the collaborative atmosphere and approach to leadership we have created. For more information, please contact Julie Rubel at [julie.rubel@gmail.com](mailto:julie.rubel@gmail.com).

I must admit, sharing this work and considering the many opportunities for member engagement has really inspired me to continue blazing ahead. As you head into the summer months, please keep these opportunities top of mind and don't be shy to reach out to me to share your thoughts about where GNAO is heading. We are continually motivated by the ideas and experiences of our members. Enjoy the sunshine!

Yours in Gerontological Nursing,

Julie Rubel,  
President GNAO

## INTERESTING READ



## THEY LEFT US EVERYTHING

BY: PLUM JOHNSON

This memoir tells the story of four siblings who set about to support each other in the care of their aging parents who still live in their large, sprawling home located on the shore of Lake Ontario in Oakville.

Plum, the oldest child and only daughter co-ordinates live-in care, doctor's appointments, trips to the mall, grocery shopping and meal preparation. When the inevitable crises occur, Plum calls her brothers home to help plan next steps. This narrative account demonstrates how each sibling can provide unique input to ensure holistic care. In particular, the reader can learn from this family's experience of coping as they organize the closing up and selling of a beloved childhood home, and bear witness to the remarkable accomplishments and lifelong quirks of their parents. It is in the act of reviewing family artifacts, sifting through the junk to identify memorabilia and hosting a wake during which precious items are distributed that Plum and her brothers can let go, celebrate both parents, including their wonderful qualities and foibles, then move forward into the future.

This is a beautifully written, funny and informative read, useful for gerontological nurses not only for their clients but also their own families.

## SEPTEMBER 2016

### Excelling in the Care of the Elderly – A course for Nurse Practitioners and Advanced Practice Nurses

BLOOMBERG FACULTY OF NURSING – U of T

The course will address the management of multiple geriatric conditions with a focus on mobility, cognition and mood, symptom management and common conundrums.

Toronto, Ontario

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

## NOVEMBER 4, 2016

### 42nd Annual GNAO Conference

The South East Chapter is excited to welcome you to Kingston, the Limestone City, on November 4, 2016 for the 42nd Annual GNAO Conference! Our focus this year is aging across the health care spectrum – “Gerontological Nursing is more than you think! Nursing & Aging Across the Continuum” .

We hope to have piqued your interest enough and that you will consider joining us on November 4, 2016 in Kingston. Stay tuned to the GNAO website, newsletter and email for further details!

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions!

## MAY 4-6, 2017

### CGNA Biennial Conference

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

# GERIATRIC NURSING NEVER OLD



The Gerontological Nursing Association Ontario is pleased to present our new segment titled...

Geriatric Nursing Never Gets Old... Highlighting Nurses in Gerontology!

Gerontological nursing is a unique and diverse field of nursing that focuses on the care of older adults. Many geriatric nurses provide care to these older people in various different settings. Although we all have specialized knowledge and training to effectively educate, assess, and care for this population, the way in which we go about it is slightly different and unique. This new segment highlights nurses working in the field of gerontology and introduces you to their world! We invite you to read up on our nurses and to engage in discussion with them via the Student Discussion Forum, Social Media (Facebook or Twitter) or directly through the contact information that they provide. As we move into the month of March, please join us in highlighting and celebrating Jennifer Reguindin!

## JENNIFER REGUINDIN



**Please describe to us your current role and what it is that you do in gerontology.**

I'm an interprofessional educator at Baycrest. I'm part of a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) funded provincial project, Centre for Learning Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI). I create education sessions, apps, books, resources that support the frail elderly, for example, emergency prevention and coordinating care in responsive behaviours. I'm also able to create and trial new activities using simulation and gaming to engage the registered and unregulated

healthcare workers and students I work with in Ontario long-term care homes.

Evaluation of all these resources and activities is a big part of what I do as well and ensuring that feedback that I received is incorporated to make things better for the learners and for the clients in long-term care (LTC). As you can see I work not just with nurses but also with allied health, personal support workers, and the students of these respective groups to support the population of this sector.

I'm also a coronary intensive care nurse and I do work with a lot of seniors who require critical care support for their cardiac issues.

### **Why did you decide to pursue gerontological nursing?**

In adult healthcare, it is difficult to get away from gerontological nursing. I have experience in community, mental health, acute care, complex continuing care, and long term care. I have taught provincially and have had an international audience as well. Gerontological nursing knowledge and skill is very much needed in all these sectors. In Canada and around the world, the baby boomers are aging. They have been integral in changing policies over the last several decades and they continue to redefine what is necessary. My career wasn't a pursuit of gerontological nursing as it is an increased awareness of reality and where I needed to be to grow as a professional. I wanted to do more and this is where I need to be.

As soon as I had this realization that there was this movement towards change in this sector, I knew I had to be a part of it. The best part of being an educator in this specialty is that I get to see an increase in quality of life of clients in LTC. Imagine seeing an increase in engagement of a client with dementia who has not spoken or does not usually open their eyes because I had the opportunity to teach the techniques to staff and students. Imagine increasing the confidence of nurses and PSWs to take leadership when a client is getting sick and preventing transfers to emergency, which is probably one of the worst things we can do for our frail elderly. It's rewarding but there's still a lot of work to do to ensure equity in this sector.

### **Many of us have been mentored or inspired by another nurse at some point in our nursing journey. Is there one person in particular who has helped you along the way in becoming a gerontological nurse?**

As a profession, nurses are inspirational. I've had the opportunity to see them in many sectors and their knowledge, compassion, and leadership in service of others is amazing. The work of Rosemarie Rizzo Parse and the language that she has brought in to the nursing profession has specifically changed my cognitive framework as a nurse. Through her work, I was able to apply, integrate, and synthesize nursing care very differently than when I started out as a nurse. Her humanbecoming theory changed the way I practice, my professional outlook, and the way I teach. This theory reinforces that what I do affects others as a nurse, as a person in respect to my environment. It highlights choice, growth, dichotomies, and unknowns that really speaks to nursing in gerontology and even as a whole.

The language of the humanbecoming theory helped me grasp that being truly present with another (a client, a student, another nurse) allows for creation, changes in perspectives, and growth.

### **What is one of the most fulfilling aspects of being a gerontological nurse?**

In my role, I have the chance to work with many long-term care (LTC) nurses and students. It has a macro impact. With the modules I've created and worked that speaks to atypical presentation of the frail elderly & working with responsive behaviours in dementia, I am able to contribute towards outcomes in LTC homes. I utilize an interprofessional education and collaboration framework in all my work to enhance the work of a team and hopefully be a more cohesive unit. I'm able to increase situational awareness and management into this sector. When this is combined with the therapeutic relationship that is unique in a LTC setting, it helps prevent emergency transfers in LTC homes in Ontario. It's humbling and drives me to be better professionally.

### **What is one thing you would want to share about gerontological nursing that most people might not otherwise know?**

It is complex and working in this field makes you reflective. The landscape is ever-changing and because of this professional growth constant. I work with a lot with the frail elderly. If they do get sick their presentation is atypical in that our textbook knowledge may not be applicable. This may lead to a lot of concerns if a healthcare practitioner is not aware.

### **Do you have any advice for nurses or students interested in pursuing gerontology as a specialty?**

The pursuit of knowledge and the desire to continuously be better as a professional should drive you forward – not just textbook knowledge, but also the client's story. Constantly remembering that there is a person behind every client is necessary in this line of work. The level of accountability, critical thinking, communication skill, and compassion needed in this specialty is like no other because of the frailty, comorbidities, and complexity of the very sick elderly and their families.

In this profession, self-care is very important.

### **If anyone is interested in connecting with you further, how can they reach you?**

Visit me at Baycrest! Or email me at [jreguindin@baycrest.org](mailto:jreguindin@baycrest.org)

# BOARD MEMBERS

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!!!!

GNAO is truly grateful the support and commitment of each of its local and provincial board members. We would like to offer special thanks to those who have left us over the past year.

### HOLLY TESSELAAR

Holly Tesselaar has served as the Lambton Chapter President for more than 10 years. Her dedication to mentoring novice nurses both in her professional role and her role with GNAO has maintained the Lambton Chapter for many years and produced a fabulous conference in 2014. Holly will be missed for her thoughtful and informed feedback but will remain active in the chapter as a mentor to incoming President Darlene Hakker.

### SALLY RAKAS

Sally Rakas leaves our Board after an extended term in the Greater Hamilton Area (GHA) Chapter. Sally brought fresh perspective and bold questions to our discussions which allowed us to reflect and move ahead with renewed purpose. She will continue to be involved locally as a mentor to new GHA President Karen Bakker Stephens.

### YESSICA RIVERA BELSHAM

Yessica Rivera Belsham joined the GNAO after being an active student member in the South East Chapter. Yessica's passion for many different areas of nursing propelled GNAO to consider new potential partners, for instance, the Palliative Care Nurses Interest Group, with whom GNAO can continue to grow. As a Student and New Graduate Liaison, Yessica shared her passion for geriatrics with colleagues across the province.

### MEGAN HILTZ

Megan Hiltz has been instrumental in maintaining the South East Chapter in her years as President. She has led the planning of our fall conference and served the GNAO provincial board with pride and unwavering commitment. Megan's compassionate leadership and commitment to those serving our country in the military has positively impacted each of us.

We wish each of these women well as they move forward in their endeavors. Your impact on GNAO will not soon be forgotten.

## WELCOME ON BOARD!!!!

### PATRICIA JULIAN

My gerontological nursing journey started when I volunteered as a writer for a seniors' home newsletter. I was new to Canada and wanted to gain volunteering experience. While working on the newsletter, I discovered a sense of reward in my activities with the residents and observations of the nurses' work. This experience led to a realization that I wanted to become a nurse and that I specifically wanted to work with the aging population. My goal as a new board member is to engage nursing students in participating with professional development activities related to gerontological nursing. These activities can include networking, skills development workshops or research.

### DARLENE HAKKER

I have been nursing for 5 years since graduating from the RPN program at Lambton College. I started my career working for Bayshore Home Health (where I continue to work to this day) providing home care. I also worked at St. Joseph's Hospice as a member of its palliative care team, and a local long-term care home.

I started my time with the GNAO Lambton Chapter as a student liaison, then moved into the role of membership chair and now sit as President. I am excited to bring a new take to the board as an RPN and from a different sector of nursing. Gerontological nursing is part of all areas of health care, it is my goal to educate and reach the many facets of the health care team so we can all go forward with knowledge and power to affect change.

## OBITUARY NOTICE

Dear GNAO Greater Hamilton Area Chapter Members,

We have lost a long-standing member of GNAO, Marilyn Neale.

Marilyn was a very wonderful, calm, compassionate, sincere and caring nurse with a deep interest in gerontological nursing. Marilyn led our Chapter's Education Committee for many years. Some of you may remember the days before email when the group would meet at Macassa Lodge stuffing envelopes with the flyers! It is because of the leadership of Marilyn and many others still active in our chapter that we have such a vital and influential organization.

# EVENTS RECAP

## GNAO PROVINCIAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On April 21, 2016 more than forty gerontological nurses came to together at Villa Colombo in Toronto to learn, share and network with colleagues from across the province. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Chapter is our ongoing host for the AGM in its new Springtime date and once again they did an outstanding job bringing together a great speaker, engaging company, and delicious food. GNAO was pleased to see so many members and students attend. Speaking of students, GNAO members again stepped forward to sponsor three students to attend our 'Dinner with a Mentor' event. Each of these students were actively hoping to become more involved in GNAO be it locally or provincially, we look forward to what great things they will bring to our association. We were also joined by three students completing placements from Finland hosted by our GTA Chapter President Leila Carnegie.

Following a tasty meal, we got down to GNAO business. The AGM heard updates from each of the Provincial Board Chairs regarding their work over the past year. I encourage you to look for these minutes to be posted to our website in the coming weeks. The date for our fall Provincial conference was confirmed to be November 4, 2016 in Kingston. We hope many of you will join us as we explore our theme, "Gerontological Nursing is More Than You Think: Nursing Across the Continuum". Details were also shared about the CGNA Biennial conference on May 4-6, 2017 in Ottawa.

With regards to board positions, it was a unique year because those elected at the 2014 AGM had only served a one and a half year term. All but one person holding office requested to extend their term another year, thus only the Student and New Graduate Liaison position vacated by Yessica Rivera Belsham was put forward for nomination. A nomination from the the floor allowed Patricia Julian to be appointed into this role. She was warmly welcomed by those in attendance. Kind words were shared about each outgoing board member (see above) and welcomes extended to those now joining us in new roles. A special mention was given to former President Elect and South East Chapter President Megan Hiltz, who unexpectedly had to vacate her role after a move outside Ontario.

Finally, speaker Dr. Giovanni Marotta from the Centre for Memory and Aging, walked attendees through the current and future states of research in dementia care. The group was engaged as Dr. Marotta discussed future prospects for treatments and shared his passion for bettering the lives of those living with dementia.

Many thanks go out to the planning committee of the GTA Chapter and to our sponsor Medical Pharmacies. We hope to see many of you again next year when we are again hosted in Toronto, stay tuned for details in early 2017.

## LAMBTON CHAPTER

On April 13, the Lambton chapter hosted the GNAO's AGM at Rosewood Manor in Sarnia. There was a great turnout of both current members and newcomers to the GNAO.

The evening began with networking and a light, healthy meal. Following that the AGM began led by Lambton's past-president Holly Tesselaar. Holly put a call forth for new board members and to our excitement we had three students answer the call.

Once business was complete we were fortunate to see a presentation from Dr. Glen Maddison on *End of Life Care: Palliative Medications and Hospice Care*. Dr. Maddison is the Medical Director at St. Joseph's Hospice in Sarnia. He spoke of the use of morphine in palliative medicine, the progression of palliative care, and new legislation.

It was an entertaining and enlightening evening for all involved – the Lambton Chapter thanks all who attended and who support the GNAO's mission.

